

# Helping Students Learn<sup>®</sup>

Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School

**Title I Cooperative  
Educational Service Unit 10**

May 2010

## NEXT STEPS

### A résumé can motivate your teen

Creating a résumé is one way to focus your teen on preparing for her future. Start by reviewing sample résumés online or in books from the library with your teen. Then help your teen prepare her résumé. It should include:

- **Personal information**—her address, telephone number and email address.
- **Education**—her expected graduation date and the name of her school.
- **Work experience.** Include the dates of employment and her responsibilities.
- **Volunteer experiences.** Include both school and community organizations.
- **Honors and awards.**
- **Special skills.** Does your teen speak a second language? Does she have special computer skills?
- **References.** Have your teen include contact information for employers and volunteer supervisors.



Have your teen type the résumé and then proofread it carefully. Is this the résumé she would like a future employer to see? If not, how can she add education, skills or experience to make herself a better candidate when the time comes to apply for the job of her dreams?

Have your teen update her résumé twice a year. It will come in handy when she applies for jobs or prepares applications for college.

Source: Randall S. Hansen, "Teen Worksheet: The Five Steps to Developing Your Résumé," Quintessential Careers, [www.quintessentialcareers.com/teen\\_resume-writing\\_worksheet.html](http://www.quintessentialcareers.com/teen_resume-writing_worksheet.html).

## DEALING WITH TOUGH ISSUES

### Talk about drug abuse with your teen

If you suspect that your teen is using alcohol or drugs, take action right away. Talk to your teen about your concerns. For a successful conversation:

- **Listen.** Once you open up the subject, be prepared to hear what your teen has to say. Don't interrupt. If you find yourself getting upset, take a five-minute break before you continue.
- **Look.** Facial expressions often tell you as much as words. During the conversation, try to read your teen's body language. Does he seem to be avoiding your eyes? Is he looking at the clock? Those signals can tell you there's something he may not be saying.
- **Respond.** Repeat things to make sure you've heard them correctly.
- **Set limits.** Say that you expect your teen to obey laws for drug and alcohol use. Set some family "laws" too.

## MOTIVATING YOUR TEEN

### Evaluate your teen's year

At the beginning of summer, review the school year with your teen. What went well? What didn't? How could things be improved? Together, list changes to make before fall—and describe how to make them.

## WELLNESS

### Promote adequate sleep

Your teen is busy with end-of-the-year activities and exams, but there's one thing that must be at the top of his priority list: Getting adequate sleep. Sleep affects memory and concentration skills. Here are some tips for your teen:

- **Get** at least eight hours of sleep each night.
- **Have** a regular sleep schedule that includes weekends.
- **Avoid** caffeine after 2 p.m.



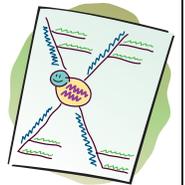
Source: Margery D. Rosen, "Sleepless Everywhere," Scholastic.com, <http://content.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=1461>.

## DEVELOPING THINKING SKILLS

### 'Spider map' can break down complex concepts

A spider map can help your teen visualize relationships and remember information. When students see how the parts fit together, it is easier for them to understand concepts. To make a spider map, have your teen:

- **Write a key word** in the center of the page and draw a circle around it.
- **Draw several straight lines** from the circle. These "legs" are the main ideas that relate to the topic.
- **Draw more small lines** coming from the spider's legs. That's where supporting details go.



For a printable copy of a spider map, visit [www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/actbank/tspider.htm](http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/actbank/tspider.htm).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

## How can parents encourage productive summers?

**Q:** Last summer, my son spent his days text messaging friends and watching TV.

Summer jobs in our area are scarce, and he doesn't want to go to summer school.

**What else can I suggest?**

**A:** It's time to set some ground rules. Let your son know that although summer means a break from school, it doesn't mean a break from responsibility.

Expect him to:

- **Help around the house.** Set up some regular chores for your son to do.
- **Exercise.** He could join a team, learn to swim or run on his own.
- **Read.** Find out if he has a required reading list for the summer.
- **Volunteer.** Check the newspaper for agencies that need help.
- **Become an intern.** It's a great way to check out a possible career.
- **Learn a new skill.** Check out learning opportunities at a community center. With classes in auto mechanics, computer technology, cooking, carpentry and more, he's sure to find something he'll enjoy.
- **Work.** If your son can't find a regular job, expect him to find part-time work such as babysitting, walking dogs or cutting grass. Have him check with his counselor and the local library for job opportunities.



PARENT QUIZ

## Is your teen's social network safe?

Parents may be vaguely aware of the potential dangers teens face on social-networking websites, but most don't have any idea how to protect their teens. Answer the following questions *yes* or *no* to see if you're doing all you can:

- \_\_\_ **1. Have you spoken** with your teen about how much information she can safely share with her online friends?
- \_\_\_ **2. Have you reminded** your teen of the "Grandma rule"—that is, everything she posts in a public place should be something she would be willing to show her grandmother?
- \_\_\_ **3. Have you talked** about what makes a person a true friend? Being "friends" on a social networking site does not mean that person is your teen's *real* friend.
- \_\_\_ **4. Do you keep** the computer in a central place in your house?
- \_\_\_ **5. Have you installed** security tools on your home computer, including filtering software and a firewall?

**How did you do?** Each *yes* means you are helping protect your teen from online dangers. For each *no* answer, try that idea from the quiz.

"For safety is not a gadget but a state of mind."

—Eleanor Everett

## Keep calm during 'storms'

Teens are known for their emotional outbursts. If your teen is blowing up and acting out of control, think about what you *can* control—your own behavior. If you stay calm, you can listen to what your teen is really saying. That's the first step toward solving the problem.

ENCOURAGING WRITING

## Improve writing skills

Your teen can enjoy the carefree days of summer and still build writing skills if she:

- **Reads—everything!** From comics to classics, regular reading builds writing skills.
- **Records.** Have your teen keep a journal. Her entries may give her ideas for writing assignments in the fall.
- **Recites.** Encourage your teen to write one new word a day on a file card. Have her write the definition on the back and quiz herself once a week.

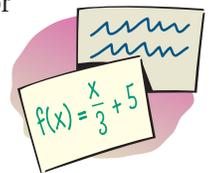
Source: Patrick Sebranek, Verne Meyer and Dave Kemper, *Write for College*, ISBN: 0-6690-0031-0 (Great Source Education Group, www.hmco.com).

TESTING TIPS

## Simplify math studying

Does your teen have a math exam coming up? Share these study tips:

- **Organize materials.** At least 10 days before the final exam, gather old notes, assignments and tests.
- **Identify problem areas.** Your teen should work on these for several days. Make flash cards for review later. Solve sample problems.
- **Review one more time.** The night before the test, your teen should go through his flash cards and spend extra time on any that give him trouble.



Source: "Steps for Studying for Your Final Exam," Coolmath.com, www.coolmath.com/finaltip.htm.

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